

C L A I M S

What is claimed is:

1. A system for providing user information to a server computer,
2 comprising:

3 a personalization engine within a server computer, comprising:
4 an ID generator generating a user ID, in response to
5 a user initiating a session accessing the server computer;

6 a banner processor embedding a banner link within
7 a web page to be transmitted from the server computer to the user, the banner link
8 linking to a central computer and including the user ID; and

9 a request generator issuing a request to the central
10 computer to provide user information corresponding to the user ID;

11 a database of user information indexed by user subscriber numbers;
12 a match processor within the central computer receiving the user ID
13 and a user subscriber number, and associating the user ID with the user subscriber
14 number; and

15 a database manager retrieving user information from said database
16 for transmission to the server computer, in response to said request generator.

1. The system of claim 1 wherein said ID generator comprises a
2 universal unique identifier (UUID) generator.

1. The system of claim 1 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI
2 program in the central computer.

1. The system of claim 1 wherein the user subscriber number is
2 delivered to said match processor from the user's computer within an Internet browser
3 cookie.

1. The system of claim 1 wherein the user information is formatted as
2 an XML document.

6. The system of claim 1 further comprising a contact mode processor in the central computer for specifying by the user a mode of contact for contacting the user.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein said personalization engine further comprises a user contact processor for sending a message to the user, using the mode of contact specified by the user

8. The system of claim 6 wherein said contact mode processor enables a user to define a set of rules specifying different modes of contact for different types of information.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein said personalization engine further comprises a user contact processor for sending a message to the user, using the set of rules specified by the user.

10. A method for providing user information to a server computer, comprising:

generating a user ID, in response to a user initiating a session accessing a server computer;

embedding a banner link within a web page to be transmitted from the server computer to the user, the banner link linking to a central computer and including the user ID;

issuing a request to the central computer to provide user information corresponding to the user ID;

receiving the user ID and a user subscriber number;

associating the user ID with the user subscriber number;

retrieving user information from a database of user information indexed by user subscriber numbers, based on the user subscriber number associated with the user ID; and

transmitting the user information from the central computer to the server computer, in response to the request.

1 11. The method of claim 10 wherein said generating a user ID comprises
2 generating a universal unique identifier (UUID).

1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI
2 program in the central computer.

1 13. The method of claim 10 wherein said receiving receives the user
2 subscriber number from the user's computer within an Internet browser cookie.

1 14. The method of claim 10 wherein the user information is formatted as
2 an XML document.

1 15. The method of claim 10 further comprising specifying by the user a
2 mode of contact for contacting the user.

1 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising sending a message to the
2 user from the server computer, using the mode of contact specified by the user

1 17. The method of claim 15 wherein said specifying comprises defining
2 a set of rules specifying different modes of contact for different types of information.

1 18. The method of claim 17 further comprising sending a message to the
2 user from the server computer, using the set of rules specified by the user.

1 19. A system for providing user information to a server computer,
2 comprising:

3 an ID generator generating a user ID, in response to a user initiating a
4 session accessing a server computer;

5 a banner processor embedding a banner link within a web page to be
6 transmitted from the server computer to the user, the banner link linking to a central
7 computer and including the user ID; and

8 a request generator issuing a request to the central computer to
9 provide user information corresponding to the user ID.

1 20. The system of claim 19 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI
2 program in the central computer.

1 21. The system of claim 19 further comprising a user contact processor
2 for sending a message to the user via the central computer.

1 22. A method for providing user information to a server computer,
2 comprising:

3 generating a user ID, in response to a user initiating a session
4 accessing a server computer;

5 embedding a banner link within a web page to be transmitted from
6 the server computer to the user, the banner link linking to a central computer and
7 including the user ID; and

8 issuing a request to the central computer to provide user information
9 corresponding to the user ID.

1 23. The method of claim 22 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI
2 program in the central computer.

1 24. The method of claim 22 further comprising sending a message to the
2 user from the server computer via the central computer.

1 25. A system for providing user information to a server computer,
2 comprising:

3 a database of user information indexed by user subscriber numbers;

4 a match processor within a central computer receiving a user ID and
5 a user subscriber number from a server computer, and associating the user ID with the
6 user subscriber number; and

7 a database manager retrieving user information about a user from
8 said database in response to a request including the user ID.

1 26. The system of claim 25 wherein the user subscriber number is
2 delivered to said match processor from a user's computer within an Internet browser
3 cookie.

1 27. The system of claim 25 wherein the user information is formatted as
2 an XML document.

3 28. The system of claim 25 further comprising a message manager for
4 directing messages from the server computer to a user having a user subscriber
5 number.

6 29. A method for providing user information to a server computer,
7 comprising:

8 receiving a user ID and a user subscriber number from a server
9 computer;

0 associating the user ID with the user subscriber number; and

1 transmitting user information about a user from a database of user
2 information indexed by user subscriber numbers, in response to a request including
3 the user ID.

4 30. The method of claim 29 wherein said receiving receives the user
5 subscriber number from a user's computer within an Internet browser cookie.

6 31. The method of claim 29 wherein the user information is formatted as
7 an XML document.

- 1 32. The method of claim 29 further comprising directing messages from
2 the server computer to a user having a user subscriber number.